



MARYLAND WIND WORKING GROUP

WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN MARYLAND

Purpose

The Maryland Wind Working Group (MWWG) is a collaboration of government, industry, academic, and other wind energy stakeholders whose goal is to advance wind energy at the state and local levels. Facilitated by the Maryland Energy Administration, the Group is funded partly through Wind Powering America, the outreach initiative of the U.S. Department of Energy's Wind Energy Program. On December 13, 2006, the Maryland Energy Administration held a MWWG meeting to identify priority activities that would accelerate the development of wind energy in Maryland. By focusing on these priority areas, Maryland can work to increase its wind energy capacity more effectively.

Background

The benefits of wind energy have been acknowledged by the Maryland General Assembly with the 2004 enactment of the Maryland Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) (Code of Maryland § 7-701). The RPS requires that 7.5% of the state's electricity come from renewable energy sources, including wind energy, by 2019. Both small-scale (up to 100 kW) and large-scale (100kW and over) projects have the potential to provide clean energy in the state of Maryland. The Department of Natural Resources' Power Plant Research Program estimates that the wind energy potential in Maryland is 750 MW. According to the American Wind Energy Association, a 1 MW turbine is enough to power 250 to 300 average American homes. There are three proposed large wind projects in Western Maryland with the potential to generate 180 MW. Two of those projects have been awarded Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCNs).

Investing in wind can:

- Diversify our State's energy resource mix;
- Strengthen our energy security while decreasing our dependency on fossil-fuel energy resources;
- Broaden our local power supply and build new and sustainable economic markets;

- Realize positive economic benefits such as job creation and local tax benefits; and
- Stabilize the cost of electricity.

Though many groups maintain significant interest in the potential for wind energy in Maryland, several barriers to development remain.

Barriers

The MWWG has identified the following key barriers to wind development in Maryland:

- Lack of adequate incentives for wind energy development as compared to other states;
- Lack of comparable incentives that create parity between wind and other sources of electricity generation;
- The Maryland RPS, as currently designed, is insufficient to encourage renewable energy development;
- Renewable energy technologies such as wind are capital-intensive and generally require long-term purchase agreements to obtain financing;
- Uncertainties in the post-permitting process;
- Lack of public education, including political leaders at the state and county level; and
- Lack of standards for interconnection agreements for small-scale projects.

Next Steps

The Maryland Energy Administration and the MWWG will develop a six-month action plan to address these barriers. The MWWG also plans to explore other areas that pose barriers to, or cause concern about, wind energy in the state. The Group will continue to refine its approach toward building consensus in the state of Maryland regarding priority action areas and public education about wind energy. MWWG will hold biweekly meetings and continue to provide legislators with all relevant information regarding the Group's efforts to accelerate wind energy development in Maryland.